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CIA Sued Here For \$10 Million By Ex-Agent

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A former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency has filed suit against the agency, alleging that it has blocked him from getting a job elsewhere and is keeping false and derogatory records about him.

The ex-agent is Wallace C. Moessmer, who lives in Clayton. He filed suit Friday in U.S. District Court in St. Louis. The two-count suit seeks \$10 million in damages.

According to the suit, Moessmer was hired by the CIA in 1963 to train and supervise mercenary pilots in the Congo. The agency transferred him in 1965 to Vientiane, Laos, where he was to serve as a senior air officer, the suit says.

But Moessmer decided the job was "unsuitable," the suit says, and began looking for another pilot's job. On May 1, 1966, he met with officers of Continental Air Services Inc., a commercial airline in Southeast Asia.

Moessmer says the airline — a subsidiary of Continental Airlines, based in Los Angeles — expressed a desire to hire him if he agreed to resign from the CIA. But no contract was signed at the time, the suit says.

On June 1, 1966, Moessmer cabled his resignation to CIA headquarters in Virginia. At that point, Moessmer's suit says, CIA officials began intimidating and threatening executives of Continental to not hire Moessmer.

Continental Airlines yielded to the demands, the suit says, and its subsidiary refused to hire Moessmer.

From that time on, Moessmer's suit says, he tried to discover any "complicity" by the CIA in his rejection by Continental. But the CIA misled him into believing it had not been involved, the suit contends.

The suit says Moessmer learned of the agency's involvement only after the CIA had released "incriminating records" to him in 1981. The records were released after he filed a request under the federal Freedom of Information Act.

As a result, Moessmer filed a claim for damages with the CIA. But on Nov. 2, 1982, the claim was denied. Moessmer then sued in federal court.

Moessmer claims in the suit that he received commendations from government officials of the Congo and was recommended by his supervisors for career-agent status with the CIA.

But the suit says CIA officials and employees in Laos and elsewhere cabled information to headquarters in Washington accusing Moessmer of being "a problem child, a racist and a management problem."

The cable recommended also that the CIA remove him from Southeast Asia, the suit says.

The suit accuses the CIA of negligence in accepting inaccurate derogatory information without verification and relying on such records in making threats against the airline seeking to hire Moessmer.

The case been assigned to U.S. District Judge John F. Nangle.